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Statement of John Keys III

Commissioner

Bureau of Reclamation

U.S. Department of the Interior

On H.R. 3334, Riverside-Corona Feeder Authorization Act

Before the

House Resources Committee

Subcommittee on Water and Power

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am John Keys, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. I am pleased to be here today to give the Department's views on H.R. 3334, the Riverside-Corona Feeder Authorization Act.

H.R. 3334, would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate with the Western Municipal Water District in the design and construction of a water supply project known as the Riverside-Corona Feeder. It provides for Federal funding for this project of 35 percent of the total project cost or \$50 million, whichever is greater.

This project would withdraw water from San Bernardino Valley groundwater aquifers that are replenished during wet years from local runoff, regulated releases from Seven Oaks Reservoir, and water from the State Water Project. It would consist of a number of wells and connecting pipelines, which would deliver up to 40,000 acre-feet of water annually to communities in western Riverside County. Project benefits include local drought protection, better groundwater management, and reduced dependence on imported water.

Mr. Chairman, the Department supports the type of resourceful utilization of local water supplies this bill calls for and the potential for reducing the use of imported supplies from the Colorado River and Bay-Delta. However, we cannot support H.R. 3334 in its present form. First, the language establishing the federal share of the project costs needs to be clarified to clearly set a maximum federal cost share. Second, we understand that feasibility level studies have not yet been completed for this project. Without a proper analysis that adheres to the "Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies," and which otherwise meets appropriate federal guidelines for consideration of project authorization, we cannot support Reclamation's participation in design and construction activities.

While I have noted our concerns with this legislation, we look forward to working with you to bring about the necessary changes required for the Department's support.

Mr. Chairman this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.